

CRS 2013: What You Should Know

~Scott Cofoid, ISO/CRS Specialist

The 2013 *CRS Coordinator's Manual* has just been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The new *Manual* will be implemented by FEMA beginning on April 1, 2013. A copy of the *Coordinator's Manual* is also available for download at www.CRSresources.org. Not only have some new items been added and credits shuffled around a bit, but also some new requirements will soon take effect.

There are many changes coming. Here's a quick list of what the 54 current CRS communities in Illinois—as well as those who are thinking about joining— should know about the new *Coordinator's Manual*.

1. All scoring and recertification policies in the 2013 *Coordinator's Manual* will not take effect until your next cycle or modification. All communities looking to join CRS will use the new *Coordinator's Manual*.
2. All modifications under the new *Coordinator's Manual* will become full cycle verifications since there are so many changes.
3. Annual Recertifications under the new *Coordinator's Manual* will require you to calculate the area of floodplain, number of new buildings in your floodplain each year, total number of buildings in your floodplain, and number of Rep Loss buildings, among other things, so you can track these items more easily from year to year.
4. There is a free Community Self-Assessment that can be performed. This allows you look at what hazards your community faces, where those hazards are located, what types of development are affected by those hazards, what type of development is in your floodplain, and the steps you need to take to advise, educate, and prepare your residents (and yourself) to help minimize flood damage in your community. This is not mandatory for any CRS Activity, but you are encouraged to go through it to gain a better understanding of flooding problems and floodplain resources in your community and how to best manage them. This Self-assessment can be found at www.CRSresources.org.
5. The format of the 2013 *Coordinator's Manual* is a little different. It now lists every creditable element separately with its specific criteria for earning credit, its impact adjustment (if applicable), and the documentation needed both at cycle and recertification time. We hope this will make the Manual easier for communities to use.
6. Class prerequisites have changed. You can now earn up to a Class 7 without a Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule (BCEGS) Rating. The new Class 6 BCEGS prerequisite is a 5/5 and the new Class 4 prerequisite is a 4/4.
7. Class 4 and Class 1 prerequisites have been increased. Credit for Activity 610 (Flood Warning & Response) is now required for Class 4 or better communities as well as some credit (if applicable to the community) in Activities 620 (Levees) and 630 (Dams). Some credits related to Natural Functions activities are now required. Refer to the 2013 *Coordinator's Manual* (pg. 210-4 through pg. 210-8) for a more detailed listing of all prerequisites.
8. Credit for Activity 310 (Elevation Certificates) now has a minimum threshold of 90%. That means that 90% of your ECs have to be correct to stay in the CRS.

9. Still being considered by FEMA is whether all ECs will be required to be submitted each year with your Recertification (after your first cycle visit with the 2013 Manual). Stay tuned on this upcoming decision.
10. The new Program for Public Information (PPI) credit is for a locally-tailored effort developed by a diverse committee to accurately define what flood-related information your residents need to know and how to best distribute this information to appropriate residents. More information and the details of how to put together an effective PPI can be found in Activity 330 and at our website www.CRSresources.org/300-3. An effective PPI can earn up to 180 additional points through other connected Activities, while providing your residents the timely and appropriate information they need.
11. A new Activity was created: Activity 370 (Flood Insurance Promotion). Credit is earned for assessing the current flood insurance coverage in your community, developing a plan to increase coverage and then implementing that plan. The objective of this Activity is to encourage communities to think about the relationship between managing development in the floodplain and understanding flood insurance as a wise investment.
12. Credit for Activity 420 (Open Space) has doubled. Credit for requiring new subdivisions to keep flood prone property unbuildable has increased significantly, too.
13. Activity 430 (Higher Regulatory Standards) has been restructured. New elements have been added and some existing standards have been valued higher. The prohibition of fill in the floodplain is ideal, but requiring compensatory storage will also increase your score.
14. Credit for Activity 520 (Acquisition and Relocation) has been significantly reduced to more accurately compare with Open Space credit.
15. There will no longer be the automatic points for the State's Dam Safety Program. You will now have to be affected by a high-hazard-potential dam and have an inundation area map to earn this credit.
16. More emphasis has been placed on the 600 Series (Warning and Response). Credits have generally increased in these three CRS Activities, but knowledge of the hazards and having a well thought out plan on how to manage the hazards are required.

Remember, Illinois has a CRS User's Group that holds meetings to discuss how to best implement better floodplain management activities and share success stories between communities as they relate to the CRS Program. Information regarding CRS is shared by this group via meetings, email, and workshops. CRS member communities are always welcome. For information on the next meeting date, please contact Mary Lou Kalsted, Staff Engineer/Stormwater Administrator, Village of Lisle at (630) 271-4107 or mkalsted@villageoflisle.org.

If you need further information on the CRS Program itself, more detail on the 2103 *Coordinator's Manual* or how to join CRS, please contact Illinois' ISO/CRS Specialist, Scott Cofoid, at (815) 220-1002 or scofoid@iso.com.